CLAIMS

1.   A method of image signal processing wherein a signal defining a pixellated multi-level image is defined by a first plurality of binary strings in a memory, the strings having associated therewith respective weightings and defining respective bit planes each corresponding to a digitised pixelwise intensity distribution, such that the weighted pixelwise intensity distribution over all said plurality of bit planes corresponds to said multi-level image,

the method being characterised in that at least a second plurality of said binary strings associated with the highest weightings are stored in sequential locations in said memory in decreasing order of weighting and the method including the step of making a succession of read cycles from the stored strings, each read cycle consisting of reading one or more of the stored strings in sequence as stored, commencing with the string for the highest weighting, the numbers of the strings read in the read cycles being varied so that at the end of the said succession of read cycles each string of the second plurality has been read out a number of times proportional to its associated weighting.

2.   A method according to claim 1 wherein the multi-level image is a multi-intensity image.

3.   A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the said succession of read cycles is repeated.

4.   A method according to any preceding claim wherein all of the first plurality of strings are stored in sequential locations in said memory in decreasing order of weighting.

5.   A method according to claim 4 wherein said succession of read cycles is such that each string of the first plurality is read out a number of times proportional to its weighting.
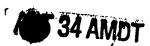
6. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein there is at least one said string with lower weighting, in addition to said second plurality, which is read out once during said succession of read cycles.

7. A method of imaging comprising the steps of performing the method according to any one of claims 1 to 5 and displaying each string of the first plurality as its bit plane each time it is read during the succession of read cycles for substantially the same period.

8. A method of imaging comprising the steps of performing the method according to claim 6 and displaying each string of the first plurality as its bit plane each time it is read during the succession of read cycles for substantially the same period, wherein when it is read said at least one said string with lower weighting is displayed as its bit plane for a duration which is less than said period and proportional to its weighting relative to the weighting of the lowest order string of the second plurality.

9. A method of imaging according to claim 7 or claim 8 wherein the bit planes are displayed on a pixellated liquid crystal display.

10. A method according to claim 9 wherein a small ac potential difference is applied to pixels of the display in periods when bit planes are not being written.

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